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NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE

ARTHUR PALMER HUDSON

Editor

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A Publication of
THE NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE SOCIETY and
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE COUNCIL

Chapel Hill

NORTH CAROLINA FOLKLORE

Every reader is invited to submit items or manuscripts for publication, preferably of the length of those in this issue. Subscriptions, other business communications, and contributions should be sent to

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The North Carolina Folklore Society was organized in 1912, to encourage the collection, study, and publication of North Carolina Folklore. It is affiliated with the American Folklore Society.

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The Folklore Council was organized in September, 1935, to promote the cooperation and coordination of all those interested in folklore, and to encourage the collection and preservation, the study and interpretation, and the active perpetuation and dissemination of all phases of folklore. It sponsors the annual Carolina Folk Festival at Chapel Hill, usually in the month of June.

EDITOR'S FOREWORD

North Carolina Folklore was founded (though, unfortunately, not established) in 1948 by Mr. Hoyle S. Bruton, then a graduate student in English and folklore, under the auspices of The University of North Carolina Folklore Council. Though sanctioned and encouraged by the Council, it was not financed properly, and Mr. Bruton's sanguine hopes for support in the form of subscriptions and advertising did not materialize. It suspended after the first number, June 1948 -- a very good one -- and thus seemed to die a-borning.

At that time the North Carolina Folklore Society was committed to the publication, with the joint auspices of Duke University, of The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, and therefore could not help materially to support the new journal.

The first three volumes of The Frank C. Brown Collection were published by Duke University Press in 1952, with assurance that the remaining two volumes would be eventually published. (The fourth volume, treating the music of the ballads and folksongs in volumes II and III and other varieties of folk music, is now in press, and it is understood that the fifth volume has, for some time, been ready for the printer.)

With this great enterprise accomplished, so far as the Society is concerned, it was time to propose a new project to the Society. Some sort of publication, to channel energies and to preserve fruits, seemed imperative if the Society was not to go to seed. Having accumulated a small reserve in the treasury, the Secretary-Treasurer of the Society proposed, in December 1953, revival of North Carolina Folklore, with the hoped-for cooperation of The University of North Carolina Folklore Council.

On motion of the Secretary-Treasurer of the North Carolina Folklore Society, who is also a member of the Folklore Council, that cooperation was obtained at a meeting of the Council in May 1954, and the mover of the motion was appointed editor of North Carolina Folklore. (He still has to run for the job before the Folklore Society!)

In these circumstances, appears North Carolina Folklore redivivus.

The half-chick Editor does not know whether the journal will, after a second lusty whoop, go to sleep again, or die altogether. All that he knows is that he has, or will have, after this issue is paid for, a balance sufficient to procure a few more bottles of pap for the youngster; and, as a grandfather, he has had considerable experience nursing infants (with the assistance of "Old Bangum," q. v. in this issue).

He hopes that the membership (present and future) of one of the oldest state folklore societies in the United States, the folklorists of the oldest state university in the nation, and the people of one of the richest states in folklore in the union will support him (half-chick) and/or the other half-chick in trying to make a go of North Carolina Folklore henceforth.

And now, on the fruits of this table (of contents) he reverently pronounces the old North Carolina Moravian grace given by Bennett Myers of Winston-Salem to Anne O'Hara of Winnetka, Illinois, and transmitted by Miss O'Hara to him:

Come, Lord Jesus,
My Guest to be,
And bless the gifts
Bestowed by Thee.

VANDY, VANDY

[The text and the tune were contributed by Mr. Manly Wade Wellman, novelist and short story writer, of Chapel Hill. Mr. Wellman first had his attention directed to the song by Mrs. Ernest Ives, of Southern Pines, sister of Adlai Stevenson, as it was sung by an old lady, a Mrs. White, "back in the sandy pine country of Moore County, North Carolina. To the best of my knowledge," he states, "it has never been published anywhere before" its inclusion in his short story of the same title which appeared in an anthology, The Best from Fantasy and Science Fiction, Third Series (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, c. 1952 and 1954). "From its archaic scale-pattern and reference to the soldier gone 'seven year,' Mr. Wellman is "convinced that the ballad refers to the American Revolution, during which a 4F or wealthy slacker able to hire a substitute woos a girl who remains true to her GI."

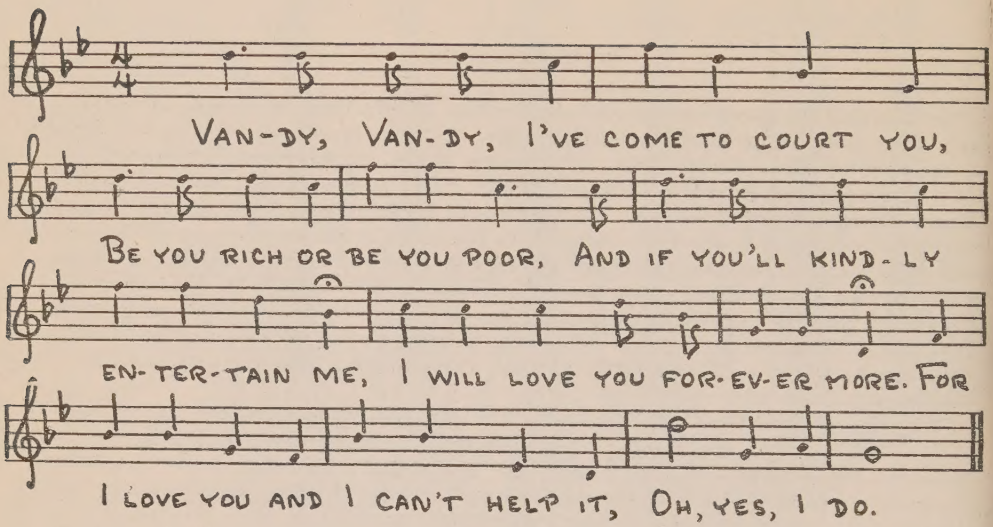
[I am not sure about the correctness of Mr. Wellman's opinion, but I recognize in "Vandy, Vandy" a compound of stanzas appearing in several other songs, "The Spanish Lady," "A Pretty Fair Maid" (or "The Sailor's Return"), and "The Drowsy Sleeper." I published a song fairly close to it in my Folksongs of Mississippi (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 151-152.

[As put together, "Vandy, Vandy" looks like a survival of a very ancient folk-lyric type known as "song of the night visit," which developed out of an ancient pagan custom permitting the lover of a girl, under properly regulated conditions, to spend a night with her before marriage. (See Shakespeare's beautiful dramatic use of the custom and its conventions in Romeo and Juliet, II, ii, and III, v.) Note the serenade in the opening stanzas. The last stanza resembles the song of the night visit known as the aube or alba (that is, the dawn song), which the man was expected to sing as he left his lady love at cock crow or the first notes of the lark or other "pretty-feathered fowl."

["Vandy, Vandy" was (probably for the first time) publicly sung by Miss Margaret Underwood, of Greensboro, a junior in the University of North Carolina, as part of a voice-guitar recital offered in the editor's ballad and folksong course last May; again at a dinner meeting of the Burlington-Graham chapter of the A. A. U. W. in partial illustration of a talk by the editor; and, with great éclat, during the Seventh Annual Carolina Folk Festival on June 10, 11, and 12, 1954.

[For the musical notation and transcription, the editor is indebted to Mr. and Mrs. Manly Wade Wellman and to Mr. Dan Patterson, of Greensboro.

[The woodcut for "Vandy, Vandy" was made by Mrs. Nell Booker Sonnemann, of New York. A daughter of the late Professor John M. Booker, and a grand-niece of President Kemp P. Battle, of the University of North Carolina, Mrs. Sonnemann grew up in Chapel Hill and received the B. A. and the M. A. degrees from the University. Mrs. Sonnemann has done some professional book illustrating, including Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre, and The Scarlet Letter (New York: The World Book Publishing Company). Recently she has changed her medium, and she is now a student of ceramics in Alfred University, Alfred, New York.]


VAN-DY, VAN-DY, I'VE COME TO COURT YOU,
BE YOU RICH OR BE YOU POOR, AND IF YOU'LL KIND-LY
EN-TER-TAIN ME, I WILL LOVE YOU FOR-EV-ER MORE. FOR
I LOVE YOU AND I CAN'T HELP IT, OH, YES, I DO.

2. Vandy, Vandy, I've gold and silver,
Vandy, Vandy, I've a house and land,
Vandy, Vandy, I've a world of pleasure,
I would make you a handsome man.
For I love you and I can't help it,
Oh, yes, I do!

3. I love a man who's in the army;
He's been there for seven long year,
And if he's there for seven year longer,
I won't court no other dear.
For I love him and I can't help it,
Oh, yes, I do!

4. What care I for your gold and silver?
What care I for your house and land?
What care I for the world of pleasure?
All I want is my soldier man.
For I love him and I can't help it,
Oh, yes, I do!

5. Wake up, wake up, the dawn is breaking,
Wake up, wake up, it's almost day,
Open up your doors and your divers windows,
See my true love march away,
For I love him and I can't help it,
Oh, yes, I do!

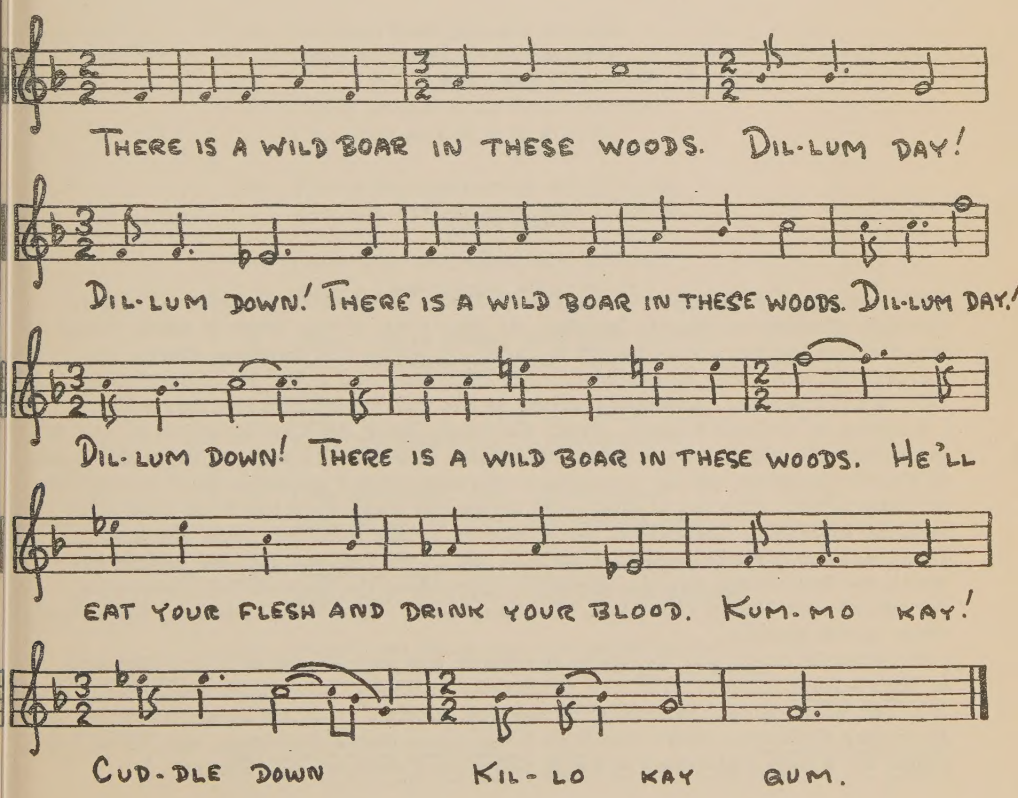
OLD BANGUM

[From a tape recording, made about 1947 by Mr. Richard Chase, of the singing of Mr. Tom Hunt, at Beech Creek, North Carolina. (Mr. Harmon was one of the principal informants in Mr. Chase's two folktale collections, The Jack Tales and Grandfather Tales, Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1943 and 1948, respectively.) Transcription and notation by Mr. Raymond McLain and Mr. Dan Patterson, of Chapel Hill.

["Old Bangum" is not in The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, as it might well have been, for Cecil Sharp published one text from North Carolina in English Folk-Songs from the Southern Appalachians, I, 54.

[It has generally been regarded as a descendant of "Sir Lionel" (Child, No. 18), which was first recorded in the Percy Folio (ca. 1650) and published in Percy's Reliques. "Sir Lionel" is a chivalric story about a knight who found a lady treed by a wild boar which had slain her knight; who killed the boar, only to find that "the pretty spotted pig" belonged to a wild woman; who had to meet a giant championing the wild woman, was badly wounded in the encounter, and was given forty days to rest up; and who in the final fight killed the giant. Child pointed out that the old ballad had much in common with the old metrical romance Sir Eglamour of Artois. But Bernard H. Bronson (California Folklore Quarterly, III, 1944, pp. 200-203) showed that "Old Bangum" is more probably a descendant of an Eglamore ballad of the seventeenth century.

[To parents, prospective parents, and would-be parents, to all indulgent aunts and uncles, and to grandparents, the editor confidently recommends "Old Bangum" as a capital lullaby. It has batted 1,000 in six games for him.]


THERE IS A WILD BOAR IN THESE WOODS. DIL-LUM DAY!
DIL-LUM DOWN! THERE IS A WILD BOAR IN THESE WOODS. DIL-LUM DAY!
DIL-LUM DOWN! THERE IS A WILD BOAR IN THESE WOODS. HE'LL
EAT YOUR FLESH AND DRINK YOUR BLOOD. KUM-MO KAY!
CUD-DLE DOWN KIL-LO KAY GUM.

1 There is a wild boar in these woods.
Dillum day! Dillum down!
There is a wild boar in these woods.
Dillum day! Dillum down!
There is a wild boar in these woods.
He'll eat your flesh and drink your blood.
Kummo kay! Cuddle down! Killo kay qumm!

2 Old Bangum went to the wild boar's den.
[Refrain and repetition as in stanza 1.]
He saw the bones of a thousand men.

3 Old Bangum blew his bugle horn,
Caused the wild boar to come running home.

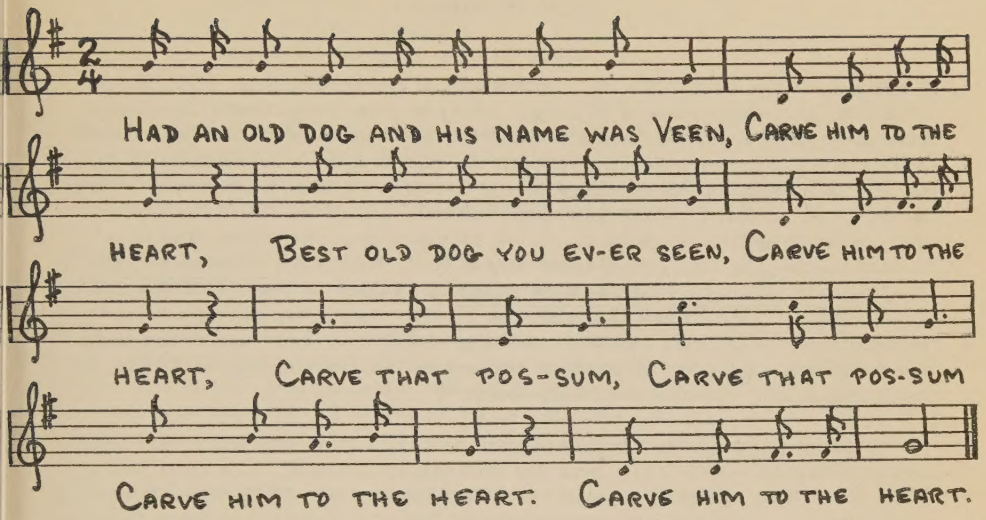
4 The wild boar came in such a dash
He cut his way through oak and ash.

5 Old Bangum drew his wooden knife;
He swore he'd take that wild boar's life.

6 They fit four hours of the day.
Old Bangum took the wild boar's life away.

OLD VEEN

[From a tape recording by Dean Ernest Bird, of Western Carolina Teachers College, Cullowhee, North Carolina, in May 1954, in the home of Miss Claire Reed of Cullowhee, a member of the editor's ballad and folksong class. Transcription by Mr. Raymond McLain (who assisted in the recording) and Mr. Dan Patterson, graduate students in the University of North Carolina.
[A native of Jackson County, North Carolina, Dean Bird received his B. A. degree from the University of North Carolina, then did graduate study in the days of Edwin Greenlaw and his associates who established graduate work in English at Chapel Hill. For the greater part of his life Dean Bird has been connected with the college at Cullowhee, for a time as acting president, and for many years as dean. He belongs to a singing family who moved into the region between the Blue Ridge and the Great Smokies about the time of the Revolution ("I was almost born a Cherokee," he chuckles). "Old Veen" has long been traditional in his family.
[The song is fairly well known in the South; see my variant of it in Folksongs of Mississippi (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1936), pp. 201-202; also, E. C. Perrow's "Songs and Rhymes from the South," Journal of American Folklore, XXVI; and Folk Songs from North Carolina, vol. III of The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore, pp. 252-253.]


HAD AN OLD DOG AND HIS NAME WAS VEEN, CARVE HIM TO THE
HEART, BEST OLD DOG YOU EV-ER SEEN, CARVE HIM TO THE
HEART, CARVE THAT POS-SUM, CARVE THAT POS-SUM
CARVE HIM TO THE HEART. CARVE HIM TO THE HEART.

2. Told old Veen to tree me one.
   Veen went and treed me one.

3. There he was a-setting on a limb.
   I reached up and took him in.

4. Threw that possum on the ground.
   Told old Veen to give him a round.

5. I took him and baked him brown,
   Placed them taters all around.

6. "Veen, what makes your eyes so red?"
   "I've run them possums till I'm almost dead."

7. Old Veen died, I laid him in the shade,
   I dug his grave with a silver spade.

8. I let him down with a golden band,
   Link by link slipped through my hand.

9. There is only one thing that bothers my mind,
   Veen went to heaven and left me behind.

10. When I get there and look at the scene,
    I'll grab me a horn and blow for old Veen.

A MODERN BALLAD

By W. F. Bryan

[William Frank Bryan (Ph.B., University of North Carolina, '00, M. A., 1908; Ph. D., University of Chicago, 1913) is a native of North Carolina. Now emeritus professor of English and former chairman of the department of English at Northwestern University, he is living in retirement at Tryon, N. C. In a letter to the editor of North Carolina Folklore, he wrote: "Here is the little bit that I remember of the football 'ballad' of '99. I'm sorry that I have forgotten so much of it, but 55 years is a long time, and it is almost surprising that I remember any of it." The editor of Sources and Analogues of Chaucer's Canterbury Tales and author of other philological studies adds: "If you think that shore is a very 'long preamble of a tale,' my justification is this: This kind of thing could have come only from such a simple, homogeneous 'primitive' society as the student body was then; it couldn't possibly develop naturally today."]

Some fifty-odd years ago Chapel Hill and the University were very much smaller than they are today, and life was vastly simpler. The first post-Civil War class to enroll as many as 100 freshmen was 1900; when President Alderman secured an appropriation of $25,000 a year from the state legislature, the student body met him at the railway station and drew his hack triumphantly to the campus; there was no central heating system; there were only a few toilets and a few cold showers in the basement of what is now the Playmakers' Building; and there were no co-eds. Women were taboo on the campus except at Commencement and during the Thanksgiving and Easter dance periods; they could not brave the cries of "Angels on the campus" from every opened window.

The students were not only very much less numerous than today, but they were much less sophisticated, much more completely shut in from the world outside, and formed a much more homogeneous group. For their simple diversions they had to rely upon themselves; there was a good deal of reading, an occasional Friday night beer keg on the athletic field, and some vigorous "bull sessions" in the evening. The most popular day-time "hang-out" was Sampie Merrett's drug store, where a good part of the student body gathered in the late morning and afternoon to wait for the distribution of the mail. I don't remember what was done at these gatherings except talk, "match" for soda checks, and drink "cokes" or "dopes" as they were called then.

But a new interest was added to these gatherings in the autumn of 1899, as I recall, with the arrival of a very long, very lanky, very strong Carolina mountaineer named Smith, I believe, a candidate for the football team. The story goes that he was found wandering in the hall of the third floor of the South Building, then a dormitory, unable to find the number above the door of the room of the football manager because he was looking up over the doorway and was so tall that he should have looked down. Smith brought with him at least one mountain tune, simple enough to be carried by any voice and readily adaptable to improvised words. I recall now only the following two stanzas:

(1) David had a harp with a thousand strings,
But all he could play was "ting-a-ling-ling."
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu! hallelu!
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu!!

(2) Some folks say that a woman can't climb,
But I saw seven up a long-leaf pine.
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu! hallelu!
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu!!

The crowds waiting in the drug-store took this piece of music to heart and made it their own. Smith had either brought from the mountains a number of stanzas or improvised them, or was jointed in improvisation by other students in the waiting group. And all could join in the resounding refrain.

Athletics, too, at this period, was much simpler and less overwhelming. In football there were no five or six men for each position to be shifted in and out by the coach; if a man was not really hurt he expected to play the full sixty minutes of a game. And in this '99 season the football team undertook to meet Georgia and Sewanee within three days. One of the most valuable and durable members of this Carolina team was the fullback, Ernest - "Pot" - Graves. As the nickname suggests, Pot was no sylph, but after kicking he could get down the field surprisingly fast.

I don't remember the outcome of the games on this football expedition, but I recall one incident which was talked about and sung on the Hill for weeks. At this time, when athletes were largely home-grown, the Sewanee teams were usually as strong as any in the South, and in the year that I have in mind, one of the Sewanee backs, Simpkins, was among the best. At some stage of this Carolina-Sewanee game, Pot made a high kick which came down in Simpkins' arms. Pot had got away almost as fast as the ball, and when Simpkins started up-field, Pot met him in a violent tackle which shook the ball loose from his hands. It was picked up a Carolina player - Pot himself possibly - and carried on down field.

By the time this Carolina football squad returned to the Hill they had evolved brief accounts of the chief episodes of the trip, put them together in several stanzas, and with great gusto were singing them to the air of Smith's "Little David." Smith, by the way, was not on this trip; scholastic difficulties had side-lined him early in the season. After the lapse of so many years I remember only one stanza:

Pot he punted, Simpkins run,
Simpkins hit the ground, ke-bum!
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu! hallelu!
Little David, play on your harp,
Hallelu!!

I wish that I were not so hazy about a great many details, because I should wish to present fully and accurately an account of this modern ballad, which was clearly the product of what might properly be called "communal composition."

The Twins

By Katherine Talbert

THE TWINS

By Katy Talbert

[Katherine Talbert is the nine-year-old daughter of Professor and Mrs. Ernest W. Talbert, of the University of North Carolina, and Chapel Hill. While in the fourth grade of the Chapel Hill School, last year, she wrote "The Twins" in partial fulfillment of the requirements of her English course. At a cocktail party given last June by her parents in honor of Professor and Mrs. Dewitt Starnes, of the University of Texas, the editor of North Carolina Folklore discovered the MS of "The Twins," not "under ye Bureau," as Bishop Percy discovered the famous Percy Folio, but on the deck of the Talbert home lying on a typewriter table, where Professor Starnes had been laboriously copying it. There, at Professor Starnes's suggestion, the editor read it aloud, to the edification and delight of the other guests. And there he determined to acquire it from Katy, by foul means or fair. The full story of the acquisition, while interesting in the annals of literature, is too long to be told here. Suffice it to say that a "date" next morning with Katy (who was out in the country that afternoon), slightly greased by the passage of a doll (a bride, with white dress, veil, orange blossoms, and flowered belt, and all that), accomplished the feat. (Upon seeing the doll, Katy cried, "Oh, Mummy, now I have twins, too!" and "I've got another one just like it. Oh, goody!") Asked why she drew the King and the Queen with their backs to the reader, Katy said," Oh, shucks, I don't know how to draw faces." Asked about "sources of and influences" on her opus, she admitted some familiarity with "Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs" and other Disney classics. To this, to Katy's perhaps unconscious absorption of Hollywood air on her visits to California, to the fact that she is the daughter of Californians, her father being also a professor of English Renaissance literature, may be ascribed something of the charm of "The Twins." But the final explanation, like that of all great imaginative works, is genius. . . . The editor is happy to have the honor of first publishing Katy. If he ever runs out of easy doctoral-dissertation subjects, he may put some keen graduate student on the problem of the influences that shaped "The Twins."]

Part I

One day, up in a castle the Queen said, "I wish we had twins." They already had six children, four girls and two boys. The King said, "We have enough children already." "Oh no," said the Queen. "I want eight children." "Oh mercy no," said the King, "Who wants eight children, six is enough." "Huh," said the Queen, "most Queen's and King's have ten children." "Oh," said the King, "I never knew that." "You didn't," said the Queen, "I always knew it." So it went on like that. But one day the Queen did get twins. They were all very happy, even the King! The King was sorry he had said what he had to the Queen. The Queen said she didn't mind, and she said she was sorry too! But she was very happy about the children. So was the King, and the children. They were really happy. Especially the youngest child, it was a girl. Now they had three boys and five girls. "My" said the Queen, "this family serntly is growing up." "It serntly is," said the King. "I like a big family," said Sue, the oldest girl. "I thought you liked small familys" said John the oldest boy. He would be King soon. Because the King was getting old and sick. The King said "I wish I wasn't so old, so I could see the twins grow up." "We wish so too," said the rest of the family.

(cont.)

Part 2

"I hope they grow up well and not be spoiled and mean," said the King. "I hope so to," said the Queen. "I am very happy," said the oldest girl, which would someday be Queen. "What should we name them?" said Pat. "Who knows?" said the King. "Why don't we name them Betty and Hal," said Cice.[1] "Well," said the King they arn't royal names." "O I don't care," said Cice. "Well I do," said the Queen. "O heck," said Cice. "Don't you dare say that word again," said the King. "Waah," said Cice, "Boo Hoo hoo hoooo," "Booooo," said the King, "Boooo to you to," he said. Cice started to laugh, but she was soon crying again. "Well," said the King. I guess we can name them Betty and Hal. "O boy," said Ceci, as she stoped crying. Betty and Hal started to cry now. "You know," said the Queen, Some times I wish we didn't have any children." "What," said the children. "Oh nothing," said the Queen. A month later the Queen got one more set of twins. "Well we have ten children after all," said the King. "I am sorry," said the Queen. "What are you sorry about," said the King, "It would have happened any way." "I know," said the Queen. But they were all happy anyway. The twins names were Alice and Rusty. Now they had six girls and four boys.

---

1 Cice: Asked about this name, which is spelled Ceci once below, Katy explained that it is pronounced as if spelled C-e-c-i. She thought it might be a shortened form of Cecily. . . . In this instance, as in all others, the editor has endeavored to transcribe Katy's MS exactly as she wrote it.

THE HARNETT HAG

By Paul Green

[Best known and most beloved of North Carolina professional writers, Mr. Green has been an enthusiastic member of, and contributor to, the North Carolina Folklore Society for at least thirty years. He is one of the chief contributors to The Frank C. Brown Collection of North Carolina Folklore (3 vols. to date, Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1952), having practically made his own private collection accessible to the editors of that publication. His "The Harnett Hag" is a well localized variant of a very ancient folktale embodying at least two world-wide motives -- the witch in animal form (Thompson Motif-Index, Mt. G211) and the silver bullet as fatal to the witch or warlock (Thompson, Mt. G272 and D1385.4; see Scott's "Wandering Willie's Tale," in Redgauntlet, in which Claverhouse is described as having been killed with a silver bullet); also, "The Doe with a Clarmed Life," in my Specimens of Mississippi Folklore (Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1928), p. 161.]

The windshield wipers kept wunk-wunking, sweeping away the rain as we drove along. Some two or three miles beyond Buie's Creek my friend Malcolm gestured off to the left.

"There's a story connected with that place out there all right," he said.

"What place?" I said, as I looked out across the rain-streaked field.

"See that thicket by the hedge row over there? A house used to stand there, long, long ago. Aunt Sarah McLean, an old Negro woman, told me about it. A man by the name of Baldy Ryalls lived there. One evening he went down below the hill to feed his hogs, and while they were eating the corn and the mash out of the trough, up come a snow-white deer from the woods close by and begun to eat the mash and stuff away from the hogs. Baldy run back to the house and got his old gun and come down and banged away at the deer. Baldy was dead shot, but he didn't hit that deer. She went on back into the woods like nothing had bothered her at all. The next evening when he come down and fed his hogs, the same thing happened. The white deer come up out of the woods, hopped over into the pen and begun to eat the mash and slops away from the hogs. Baldy had brought his gun, this time, loaded with buckshot. So he banged away pime blank at the deer. But he couldn't hit her. She went on back into the woods like nothing had happened.

"Well, Baldy was not to be outdone. So that night he got out a silver dollar and melted it down and made himself a silver bullet. So the next evening he was all prepared.

"He went down and fed his hogs and stood waiting with his gun all loaded with the silver bullet. Sure enough, up come the deer, snow white and beautiful as ever, out of the woods. She hopped over in the pen and begun to eat the way she had done before. Then it was Baldy let her have it full blast with his silver bullet.

"But bless your life, he hardly noticed whether he hit the deer or not. For right after he fired off his gun at the deer and she had plunged and hobbled away back into the woods, he heard the most outdacious yowling and screeching going on up at the house behind him. The children come running out on the porch hollering for him to hurry and see what had happened bad to Grandma.

"So he run up to the house and into the room and there lay Grandma on the floor writhing and twisting and screeching with pain. She had been shot clean through the leg and blood was pouring all out over the floor.

"Yes sir, Grandma was a hag, that's what she was -- a witch woman."

BRER TERRAPIN LEARNS TO FLY

By Mrs. John L. Johnson

[Born on a plantation near Athens, Georgia, where, long before she ever heard of Joel Chandler Harris, she heard the Negroes tell stories of the sort immortalized by Uncle Remus, Mrs. Johnson (Miss Sue Belle) went to Mississippi in 1900 as the bride of a young professor of French who taught many years at Mississippi College (Clinton) and became president of the Mississippi Woman's College at Hattiesburg. Active in church and civic affairs, Miss Sue Belle is still a vivacious talker and raconteur. In the Spring semester of 1954 she told the following story to the editor's ballad and folksong class. Among her audience was her son, Dr. Cecil Johnson, Associate Dean of the General College of the University of North Carolina and professor of history. Mrs. Johnson's letter to the editor accompanying her story is so interesting and so characteristic of her that it is quoted as a sort of preamble to her tale.

["I have been visiting in the Mississippi Delta, and while there came in touch with an incident that may interest you:
["Jim Gunn is a Negro with a large family. He works at a lumber yard in town but lives in an adjacent country neighborhood.
["Jim was appointed trustee of the little neighborhood Negro school, which was in a very run-down condition. He carried scraps of lumber and roofing, etc., from the lumber yard and, each afternoon after work hours, repaired the building, also putting in window panes.
["Then others were inspired to help, and paint was bought and work contributed, so that a great transformation was wrought.
["At this point, some began to say: 'Jim Gunn? Why, Jim Gunn can't read and write. Our school will be looked down on with that kind of a man for trustee.' So they left him off the board at the next election.
["His children continued to be the school's star pupils. A year or so later, the school was needing some homemade playground equipment and some repairs that could be provided by a strong right arm, a resourceful mind, and a willing heart. It became the unanimous decision that Jim should be restored to the board, and he was. There he still carries on his constructive work. He never seemed to mind losing the honor of being a trustee any more than he minded resuming the hard work.
["It seems to me that the story shows a contrast between some things we are doing now in the name of education and the education that draws out the best in the individual, gives the soul its bent, and fits the child for useful living. Sometimes it seems to me that we have fooled ourselves into believing that knowledge is education, even when it is unrelated to life as we live it.
["I am enclosing the account of Brer Terrapin's adventure. I do fairly well talking the dialect, but not so well writing it.]

Hit was dat time when Brer Terrapin wuz so sick. He wuz layin' by de side o' de road a-mou'nin' 'n' a-groanin', when Brer Buzzard flew down an set down by him to ax him how he wuz.

(cont.)

Brer Terrapin 'lowed as how he wuz as well as a man could be wid one red eye and he liver out o' fix.

Brer Buzzard tol' him he ought to see a doctor, an' Brer Terrapin 'lowed as how he done been to de doctor an' de doctor tol' him wuzn't nothin' gwine do him no good lessen he learn how to fly.

Brer Buzzard say dat ain' no trouble atall, dat flyin' is de easies' thing in de worl'. He tol' Brer Terrapin to clam up on he back, an' he would take him up in de yelements an' learn him how to fly.

Brer Terrapin clum up, an Brer Buzzard spread he wings, an' he went up an' up. But w'en Brer Terrapin look down over Brer Buzzard's shoulder, uvverthing look so little an' funny dat Brer Terrapin gunst to git skeered, an' he say: "How I gwine fly?"

Brer Buzzard say: "Treckly, I's gwine swoop out fum under you, an' all you got to do is jist flap yo' wings an' fly."

So Brer Buzzard swoop out fum under him, an' Brer Terrapin c - o - m - e down -- kerbang! W'en he hit de groun', Brer Buzzard flew down an' say, "Well, yer don' know how to fly, does yer?"

Brer Terrapin, still a-mou'nin' an' a-groanin', say, "O y - e - s, I knows how to f - l - y, but I don' know how to light!"

TWO VERSIONS OF A HARD-LUCK STORY

I

Soft-Pedaling Sorrowful News

By James M. Carpenter

[A Mississippian by birth and early training (B. A., University of Mississippi, 1913, M. A., 1914), Dr. Carpenter completed his education at Harvard University (Ph. D., 1929). After six years' residence and 40,000 miles of travel in the United Kingdom, he returned to the States with perhaps the greatest and most varied collection of British ballads, folksongs, sailor chanteys, folk plays, and other types of folklore ever got together by one man. After years of teaching and lecturing at Harvard, Wellesley, Vassar, Smith, Williams, and other Eastern colleges and universities, and at Duke, he was retired from the professorship and chairmanship of English at Greensboro Woman's College this year, and he is now planning to settle down, preferably in Chapel Hill, and prepare the best parts of his great collection for publication. He picked up the following version of the "magpie story" while he was in England.]

An English squire, returning home after an extended visit, was met by his overseer, John, at the big gate opening upon the mile-long wooded drive leading to the country house. The following conversation ensued.

"Well, John, how are things going on at home?"
"Bad enough, your honor. The magpie's dead."
"Poor Mag! How came he to die?"
"Eating horse flesh, your honor."
"Eating horse flesh! Where did he get so much horse flesh?"
"From your dead horses, your honor, at the burning of your barn."
"The burning of my barn! How did my barn catch fire?"
"From your house, your honor, when it burned."
"My house burned! How, pray, did my house catch fire?"
"From an overturned candle at your mother's wake, your honor."
"My mother's wake, alas! What illness or grief carried her away?"
"She could not long survive the death of your father, your honor."
"My father dead, too! Pray tell me what calamity brought about his death."
"He succumbed to the news of the mortgage foreclosure upon your estate, your honor."
"Mortgage foreclosure! Do you mean to say that the mortgage on my estate has been foreclosed!"
"Yes, your honor. The mortgage has been foreclosed, and you are not worth a penny in the world."

II

Sorter Like This

[Clipped from a Texas newspaper (name not remembered) by Professor Floyd Stovall, of the University of North Carolina, in June 1954.]

A long time ago a plantation owner in South Carolina had to go to New York or somewhere else up North on a long visit. As he approached his home on returning, he met one of his hands named Sam. They met in the road in woods, out of sight of the house.

"Well, Sam," he asked, "how are things?"

"Not too good, I reckon," Sam answered.

"What you mean, not too good?"

"Well, your fine dog, ole Joe, he's daid."

"Dead. What happened to him?"

"He burned up."

"How come that?"

"He was in the barn when it burned up."

"How come the barn to burn up?"

"It caught on fire from the big house."

"You mean the big house burned down?"

"Yais, sir."

"How'd it come to burn?"

"Caught on fire from one of them lace curtains."

"How'd the lace curtain catch on fire?"

"From a candle."

"What was a candle doing next to lace curtains?"

"Candles was lit on your mother-in-law's coffin and wind blowed lace curtain against one."

"You mean my mother-in-law's dead?" the plantation owner asked without any marked anxiety.

"Yais, sir."

"What was the matter with her?"

"Well, it was sorter like this. Your wife she run off with overseer and then her mother she got so nervous and worked up she jes' died."

IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN WORSE

[Contributed by Mr. Charles Woodson, manager of the Jarrett Springs Hotel, Dillsboro, Jackson County, North Carolina, who does not remember where he learned it.]

His horse dropped dead and his mule went lame,
And he lost six cows in a poker game.
Then a hurricane came on a summer day
And blew the house where he lived away.

Then an earthquake came when that was gone
And swallowed up the land that the house stood on.
Then the tax collector came around
And charged him up with the hole in the ground.

AFTER THE SCREECH OWL HOLLERS

By John Q. Anderson

[Dr. Anderson, a native Texan, took his Ph. D. in English at the University of North Carolina in 1952. He is now a member of the English staff of Texas A. & M. College and is engaged in a biographical and critical study of the Louisiana Swamp Doctor. Last winter he was elected vice president of the Texas Folklore Society.]

Among anecdotes related by Henry Clay Lewis, alias "Madison Tensas," in his Odd Leaves from the Life of a Louisiana Swamp Doctor,[1] is the tale of the North Carolina woman whose death from eating cold fried collards, despite medical attention, was presaged by the cry of a screech owl. The story is told to illustrate the Swamp Doctor's experience in a similar situation in which he, a recent graduate of medical school at twenty, first encountered folk superstition and suspicion as a young doctor.

Recently located in the swamp country of northeast Louisiana, Dr. Lewis had as his first patient an elderly woman who lived deep in the swamp and who was suffering from delirium tremens, having lost her whiskey barrel when her smokehouse burned. After administering a dose of "Arkansas Fitifuge" (a mixture of brandy and opium), the doctor found that he was expected to relate "all the news, scandal and secrets of the neighborhood" to the six neighbor women who had come to "set up" with the sick and who at first were skeptical of his youth. Wearily he sat down to wear out the night.

> There was Miss Pechum, and Miss Stivers, and Miss Limsey, on one side, and Miss Dims, who, unfortunately, as she informed me, had had her nose bit off by a wild hog, and Miss Ripson, and Miss Tillot, on the other. Six old women, with case-hardened tongues, and only one poor humble "Swamp Doctor" . . . .[2]

After he had exhausted his news, he was regaled with discourses on "yarbs," "kumfrey tea," "sweet gum sav," "sheep safern," and other "wonderful truck." Past midnight, the conversation died abruptly when a screech owl screamed outside the cabin. The horrified women unanimously agreed that the bird was a harbinger of the patient's death. "She's knit her last pair of socks!" Mrs. Ripson cried. "The screech owl[3] is hollered, and she's bound to die, certin!"

When the young doctor, not versed in folk superstition,[4] asked why she was so sure, Mrs. Ripson enlightened him with the story of the North Carolina woman who

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1 Philadelphia, 1850. Several of these humorous sketches had appeared previously in the Spirit of the Times, widely circulated New York weekly newspaper.

2 "My First Call in the Swamp," Odd Leaves, p. 149.

3 The American Dialect Dictionary shows "squinch owl," "squeech owl," "scrich owl," and "squitch owl" as variants. In the Texas Panhandle and in western Oklahoma, I have heard the bird called a "shivering owl," probably because of the quavering tones of its cries.

4 The Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend, II, 838, summarizes superstitions about owls. In Greek mythology, the owl was sacred to Athena, and in Rome it was a bird of ill omen whose hooting presaged death, as in the instances of the death of Augustus and the murder of Caesar. In European and American folklore generally

died after the screech owl hooted, despite all the attending physician could do. Fortunately, Lewis allows Mrs. Ripson to tell the tale in her own words:

> I reculleck when I lived down to Bunkum County, North Caroliny--Miss Dims, you node Miss Plyser, what lived down to Zion Springs? . . . Well, Miss Plyser war takin awfil sick arter etin a bate of cold fride collards. . . .[5]

At this point, Mrs. Ripson was reminded that Mrs. Plyser's husband had once considered moving to "Luzaanny," "wair all you had to do to clar the land, war to cut down all the trese and wate fur the next overflow to wash them off," but circumstance changed his plans. After this digression, Mrs. Ripson got back to her story:

> . . . well, as I sed, Miss Plyser made herself monstrous sick etin cold fride collards; wen I got where she was they had sent for the doctor, an' shortly arter I kum he cum, an' the fust thing he axed fur arter he got in the house war for a hanful of red-pepper pods--it war a monstrous fine timefor pepper and other gardin truck that sesun--an' wen he got them he tuck a han-ful of lobely an' mixt the pepper-pods with it an' then he poured hot bilin' water over it, and made a strong decokshun. Jes as it was got reddy for 'ministering, but before it was guv, I heered a screech owl holler on the gable end of the cabin. I sed then as I say now, in the present case, that it war a sine and a forerunner that she was gwine to die, but the doctor, in spite of my 'swadements, gin her a tin cup of the pepper and lobely, but I nude it war no use--the screech owl had hollered, and she war called fur . . . . bein' carrid to a grave by cold fride collards apeered a hard case, but the Lord is [in] the Heavens an' he nose! . . . it war too late, the screech owl had hollered . . . . I sed from the fust she wood die.[6]

Certain that she had convinced the Swamp Doctor of the unmistakable import of the owl's cry they had just heard, Mrs. Ripson advised, "Doctor, weed better see how Miss Jimsey is; it's no use to waste the 'futifuge' on her, the screech owl has hollered, and she mus go though all the doctors of a king war here . . . ."

Despite Mrs. Ripson and the screech owl, the patient survived and demanded more "Fitifuge," since her "fits," as the doctor knew, were a result of lack of stimulants. The amazed Mrs. Ripson confessed to the patient, "I thot sure you cuddent stand it till mornin, speshully arter I heerd the screech-owl holler! 'tis a mirrykul, sure or else this is the wonderfulest doctor in creashun!" The patient inquired if the screech owl had hollered twice. "No," replied Mrs. Ripson, "he only screached wunst! Ef he'd hollered the second time, I'd defide all the doctors in the created wurld to 'ad cured you; the thing would have bin unpossible!"

The Swamp Doctor smiled to himself, for he distinctly recalled two cries, the second not heard by Mrs. Ripson in her astonishment over the first. Without reminding Mrs. Ripson of her test case of the North Carolina woman, the Swamp Doctor took his leave with "their assurance of future patronage," overhearing as he went Mrs. Ripson's exclamation: "Well, bless the Lord I didn't die last yere of the yaller janders, or I'd never lived to see with my own eyes a doctor who could cure a body arter the screech-owl hollered!"

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the owl's hooting presages death. Vance Randolph, Ozark Superstitions, (New York, 1947), p. 307, says the Ozarkers throw a handful of salt or feathers on the fire to silence the screech owl outside a cabin.

5 Odd Leaves, p. 152.

6 Ibid., pp. 152-153.

PROTOCOL

[Contributed by Mr. William R. Bibb, a student in the class of Professor R. B. Voitle, as a paper in freshman English at the University of North Carolina.]

On our farm in western North Carolina, I have spent many happy hours. During the summer months, I usually work as a helper to the foreman. It was on a warm, uncomfortable day that I had to haul a load of manure and a hog into Boone.

I suppose it is about a five- or six-miles drive. I was taking my time getting to town. On the way I picked up an old colored man who was also headed into Boone.

Half way to town I was stopped by some friends and questioned about my cargo. I replied, "I am hauling a load of manure, a hog, and an old colored man."

After this brief conversation, I resumed my lazy drive into town. On the outskirts of Boone, I met the town constable, and in the course of our conversation he inquired about my load.

Again I replied, "A load of manure, a hog, and an old colored man."

I resumed the drive, and before many minutes had passed I was surprised to hear the old man speak.

"Mister Bill, mind if I axes a favor of you?"

I replied that he was perfectly free to ask a favor and that I would be glad to accommodate him if possible.

"Well, suh," he said, "the nex' time we is stopped, Mr. Bill, an' somebody axes what you is haulin', would you please, suh, introduce me fust?"

THE TREE NAMED WILLIAM

By Anna Stout

[Miss Stout, who graduated from the University of North Carolina in June 1954, lives at Scott, Mississippi, where her father is manager of the Delta Pine and Land Company, said to be the largest long-staple cotton plantation in the world. Here, where the laborers are largely Negroes, Miss Stout has had many insights into Negro folklore.]

Several years ago, we had working for us a seventeen-year-old Negro boy by the name of William Caver. We employed him to do odd jobs around the house, and he lived in the servants' quarters behind our garage. We liked him very much -- he was a capable and cheerful fellow, though somewhat inclined to laziness. In the winter time, he would eat in the kitchen, and after washing dishes, he would read, or watch the washing-machine in operation. He was fascinated by it.

William was quite eager to learn, and was constantly asking Daddy questions about the war news and anything he could think of to be inquisitive about. The war was on his mind most of the time because he knew he'd have to go into the army when he reached eighteen.

Most of the Negroes we have employed have been in some way or other superstitious, and William was no exception. To play on his superstitions was one way of getting him "to do something up brown."

I remember that Mother had been after him to put up a clothes line for her, and for several weeks he'd been saying, "Yas'm, I'm gonna do it this week." Finally, one morning at breakfast, Mother said, "William, if you don't get that clothesline put up, my ghost is going to come back and ha'nt you when I die." I guess he thought Mother's ghost wouldn't be slow in coming, for the clothesline was put up in short order that day.

Late one afternoon my father came home with a silver-leaf maple which he wanted William to set out in the front yard. He called William, and they walked down to the spot where Daddy wanted the tree planted. He said: "William, once I had a boy working for me, and his name was Thomas. One day he and I were setting out a tree, and I said to him, 'Thomas, I'm going to name this tree after you, and if anything happens to this tree, something will surely happen to you.' And, sure enough, that tree died, and something jumped out at Thomas on his way home one night, and scared him so he ran for two miles.[1] Now, I'm going to name this tree William, and if anything happens to it, something will surely happen to you."

That story, with its omen, was reliable insurance on that tree, for William put fertilizer around it and watered it twice a day in dry weather -- took care of it as if it were a child for a couple of months.

About that time William was drafted. After the usual training, he was sent to Germany. The bullets must have been flying pretty thick over there, because he wrote us long letters, in each of which he would ask about how the tree was getting along, and make some suggestion about watering it and otherwise caring for it. After considerable combat experience in Germany, William was sent to the Far East and was in the fighting there.

He survived both wars unharmed, and upon his return to the States he was stationed in Upper New York State. He was eager to get back home and to see us. But the next news we received about William was that he had contracted pneumonia and died.

William had received citations and medals for valor in combat. When we went around to see his mother, she proudly showed them to us. I can still remember the pity we all felt for her and for William -- he had been such a favorite with us.

The silver-leaf maple named William is thriving yet, a lovely monument to his memory.

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1 At this point, Miss Stout interpolates: "Funny thing, that really happened to Thomas." She might have added that the notion of the identity of an individual and a tree named for him is an idea very old and widespread in folklore. See John Sale's The Tree Named John (Chapel Hill: U. N. C. Press, 1930), from Mississippi.

CATALOGUE OF DEATH ON THREE-MILE CREEK

By Morris Markey

[Morris Markey's "Carolina Mountain Folk," which appeared in the magazine Holiday for September 1948, beginning on page 80, is an excellent illustrated article covering many aspects of folk character, life, and lore. Of particular interest is the section sub-titled "Catalogue of Death" (pp. 132-133), which is reprinted below with the kind permission of the Editors of Holiday. It relates to a little community near Penland, "about forty miles from Asheville."]

. . . Written records were extremely rare among the mountain folk and still are, for that matter. But here was a Catalogue of Death on Three Mile Creek, religiously kept by Uncle Jake Carpenter. Uncle Jake had died a little while before [about 1928] , leaving this worn book of obituary notices:

Alen Wiseman age 80 dide March 10 1877. Ware a farmer, and stild. Never had no dronken boys. Never had no dock in house for sick. He had 12 in famely.

Wm Davis age 100.8. Dide Oct 5 1841. Ware old soldier in rev war and got his thi broke in last fite at Kings Mountain. He ware a farmer and made brandy and never had no dronkers in famely.

Joe Frank age 72. july 8 dide 1899. Ware fin man. He sed what he thot.

Charles McKiney age 72. Dide May 10 1852. Ware a farmer in blew ridge. Had 4 womin . . . married to 1. Live at McKiney Gap. All went to fields to work to mak grane. All went to crib for corn. All to smok hos for mete. He cild 75 to 80 hogs a yer and wimen never had no words bout his havin so many wimin. If it ware these times thar would be hare pulled. That ware 42 children blong to him. They all went to prechin together. Nothin sed. . . . He mad brandy all his life. Never had no foes. I nod him.

Kim Hone age 73. Dide oc 15 18888. Ware black smith. Had 6 gals that cod work in shop. He ware 6 feet hi.

Loney Ollis age 84. Dide jun 10 1871. Grates dere honter. Wreked bee trees for hony. Cild ratell snak by 100. Cild dere by thousen. I nod him well.

Lege Carpenter age 99. Dide march 18 1859. It snode that nite 14 inch hi.

Turner Carpenter age 23. Dide nov 20 1862. Fite for his country, lost life.

Loner Whitman age 18 1914 dide shot hisself cos his gal bent back on him dec 25.

Frank James age 74 feb. 28 1900. He ware grate bank rober him and Jesse James and Bob Ford.

TRADITIONAL VERSES FROM AUTOGRAPH ALBUMS

By Anne O'Hara

[A resident of Winnetka, Illinois, Miss O'Hara took her A. B. degree at Randolph-Macon Woman's College in 1953 and her M. A. degree in Romance Languages at the University of North Carolina in June 1954. As a member of the editor's ballad and folksong course in the Spring semester of 1954, she was encouraged to write the following paper.]

The importance of the verses written in autograph albums in the understanding of adolescents has lately been stressed in an interesting article by M. L. Story of Winthrop College,[1] who has expressed his views on the value of these verses as follows:

> Perhaps too little attention has been given by psychologists and educators to the underlying interest-traits which these brash and spontaneous inscriptions seem to reveal. -- The choice and perpetuation of these folkways of expression, however, seems to be too prevalent and too lasting among this early-adolescent group to be considered in such a light. These timeless jingles seem actually to provide a more revealing clue to the adolescent personality than many of the scientific approaches so prevalent today. We will undoubtedly gain a vastly improved insight into the universal motives and urgings which characterize this transition period in the life of young people when we fully understand their unfailing interest in this unique and highly interesting medium of expression.[2]

I propose in this paper to present a number of verses which have been collected from students at the University of North Carolina. Many of them have parallels given in the article just quoted; and parallels will be found in autograph albums all over the country. As in the case of traditional ballads and songs, there are many variants. Because the date may be of some interest to students of this adolescent folklore, I am including it in the case of verses from my own autograph albums. I am also quoting here some verses from an album of the 1890's, many of which are dated.

Story divides the typical verses into nine categories: "When-you-get-married" jingles; derogatory rhymes; statements of friendship; verses showing school or community spirit; aphorisms and words of advice; humorous "toasts"; miscellaneous" wise cracks"; jingles about writing in autograph books; and verses written in a cryptogram or rebus form. I add a tenth category: parodies of nursery thymes.

The jingles beginning: "When you get married--" are among the most popular. Story points out that they reflect an awakening consciousness of the opposite sex among adolescents of junior high school age; their lack of originality serves as an aid to avoiding embarrassment.[3] Examples of this form which I have found are:

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1. M. L. Story, "The Folklore of Adolescence: Autograph Books," Southern Folklore Quarterly, XVII: 207-212, September, 1953.
2. Ibid., p. 212.
3. Ibid., XVII, 207.

When you get married
And live on a hill
Send me a message
By the Whip-O-will.

When you get married
And live down South,
Remember me
And my big mouth.

When you are married
And live on figs
Don't treat your husband
Like Maggie does Jiggs.

When you are married
And have twins
Don't come to me
For safety pins.

When you are married
And live on a hill,
Don't fall down
Like Jack and Jill.

There are also some verses which do not fit into the pattern but which clearly belong in this category. The following depends on the use of a girl's name; I supply "Mary Brown."

Mary now,
Mary forever
Brown now
But not forever.

In the following verse a boy's name must be supplied. It is, of course, to be written in a girl's album.

First comes love,
Then comes marriage,
Then comes _____
With the baby carriage.

Derogatory rhymes are often written in a friend's autograph album in a jesting spirit. They do not, of course, represent the writer's true sentiments.

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Rain on the rooftop
Reminds me of you.
Drip! Drip! Drip!

Roses are red,
The grass is green,
Stovepipes are hollow
And so is your bean.

Roses are red,
Violets are blue,
Horses have horse-teeth
And so do you.

Violets are pink,
Roses are blue,
Monkeys like you
Belong in a zoo.

The stork came flying
With little ____ crying
And when he saw she was a fool
He dropped her in the ____ school. (1944)

You kissed him in the moonlight,
His face was ghastly white,
For he was a marble statue
And you were drunk that night. (1944)

Statements of friendship may be either comic and exaggerated (to avoid embarrassment) or serious. The former category is much more frequent among modern adolescents. An example is:

I love you little,
I love you big,
I love you
Like a little pig,

Most of these comic statements of friendship, however, are in sentence form and begin, "Yours till--." They may be used separately or in connection with other verses.

I am yours till elephants wear suitcases instead of trunks.

Yours till the ocean wears rubber pants to keep its bottom dry.

Yours till the mountain peeks and sees the salad dressing.

Yours till hairpins get seasick riding on the permanent waves.

A few more serious verses are found in modern albums:

In your long chain of friends consider me a link.

When these lines you do regret,
Burn them up and me forget,
But watch the flames as they ascend,
For these lines were written by a friend.

A ring is round,
And has no end;
That's how long
I'll be your friend.

It is instructive to compare these with a few verses found in an album of the 1890's (from Iowa):

When with your dear companions
Cast not one thought on me,
But when alone you meditate,
Then think, oh! Think of me. (1891)

Remember me,
If not a task;
"Remember me"
Is all I ask. (1891)

Our friendship has budded on earth;
May it blossom in heaven. (1898)

Surprisingly enough, I have found no verses showing school or community spirit, and no humorous "toasts." Most of these verses collected from students, however, were quoted from memory; a search through albums might produce better results. There are no examples of these types in my two albums.

Aphorisms and words of advice (usually humorous) are fairly popular:

Such is life,
And life is such,
And after all it isn't much.
First the cradle,
Then the hearse.
It could have been better,
But it might have been worse. (1945)

If your life is very sad
And your rewards are few,
Remember that the mighty oak
Was once a nut like you.

Be good.
If you can't be good,
Be careful.
If you can't be careful,
Name it after me.

This "advice" may be compared with a verse dated 1891, in a serious vein:

Do what conscience says is right;
Do what reason says is best;
Do with all your mind and might;
Do your duty, and be blest.

Miscellaneous "wise cracks," even if they have nothing to do with friendship or with autograph books, are always well liked:

If in heaven we do not meet,
Hand in hand we'll face the heat.

When apples grow in orange trees,
When desert lands grow muddy,
When cats and dogs wear B. V. D. 's,
Perhaps we need not study.

To market, to market,
To buy a red roast;
Home again, home again,
Poached eggs on toast.

The elephant stepped on the baby's face,
Blood and gore all over the place,
And me without a spoon.

I saw you in the garden,
I saw you in the lake,
I saw you in the bathtub-
Whoops! my mistake.

Roses are blue,
Violets are pink,
Immediately after
The thirteenth drink.

These are described as "New Yorkese":

Marguerite!
Go wash your feet.
The Board of Health's
Across the street.

Paddy from Ireland,
Paddy from Cork,
With a hole in his britches
As big as New York.

This jingle is a variant of a verse I have heard sung as part of the song "Oh, You Can't Get to Heaven":

If you get to heaven
Before I do,
Make a hole,
I'm coming too.

Jingles about the act of writing in autograph books are very numerous; according to Story, these have developed from "a rather typical, self-conscious pre-occupation with the very act of signing one's name in such books."[4] Here are some examples:

Way back here and out of sight
I sign my name to be polite,
(Variant: "just out of spite".)

4. Ibid., XVII, 210.

Remember the girl from the city,
Remember the girl from the town,
Remember the girl who ruined your book
By writing upside down.

You have many a friend
And many a lover,
So for lack of space
I'll write on the cover.

In this book is room to write,
Save it for your lover.
Since I am just a friend,
I'll write it near the cover.

Inspiration won't come-
Can't write-too dumb-
Bad ink-
Bad pen-
Good luck-
Amen.

It tickles me so,
It makes me laugh,
To think you want
My autograph.

I don't write for fortune,
I don't write for fame,
I write because you asked me to
And so I'll write my name.

You asked me to write in your album,
But I know not how to begin,
For there's nothing original about me
Except original sin.

A sort of cryptogran is often seen in autograph books; Story thinks that it originated in the rebus,[5] which is familiar to children from their magazines or comic books. These verses seem, to the young adolescents who use them, very witty; and humor is almost obligatory in autograph albums.

My 4 U.

2 Pretty (or "good," or "sweet")
2 B
4 gotten.

Never B .
Sometimes B #.
But always B .

5. Ibid., XVII, 211.

A B C D goldfish.
L M N O goldfish.
O S A R!

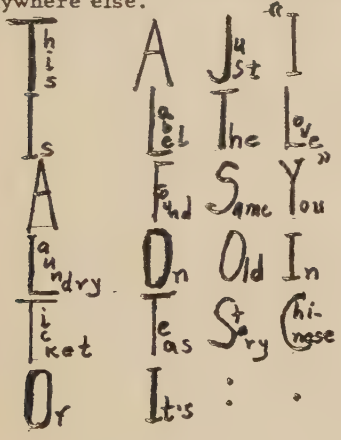
Remember M,
Remember E,
Put them together
And remember ME.

Y Y U R,
Y Y U B.
I C U R
Y Y 4 me.

When you're in love it's ♥.
When you're engaged it's ♦.
When you're married it's ♣.
When you're dead it's ♠.

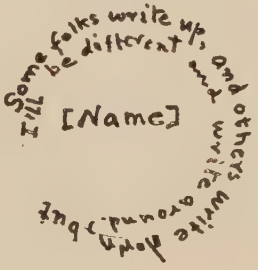
Notice the cynicism of this last verse with regard to marriage. This attitude is also found in the "When-you-get-married" jingles.

Here is a very elaborate cryptogran from my own album. I have never seen it anywhere else.



(This is a laundry ticket
or a label found on teas.
It's just the same old story:
"I love you" in Chinese.)

Tricks of writing are also used:



(Some folks write up
And others write down,
But I'll be different
And write around.)

The symbols used in these verses deserve a moment's consideration. Most use drawings, arithmetic symbols, or letters of the alphabet. The two most interesting are that which makes use of musical symbols and that drawn from playing cards; it seems to me that children first become interested in adult card games at about this age. I am unable to say where the "Chinese" idea came from.

Last of all, I include four rhymes which are obvious parodies of nursery thymes too well known to quote. I imagine that they were originally composed by some child who wished to be especially witty. It is not uncommon for children to write their own verses for a friend's autograph album. There are some original compositions in my own albums, which I have not quoted as not being traditional; but it is of course quite possible that an original verse written by one child could be taken up by others in the group, and thus pass into the autograph - album tradition. The parodies were all collected from students at the University of North Carolina.

Twinkle, twinkle, little star,
What the hell do you think you are?
A flashlight.

Mistress Mary, quite contrary,
How does your garden grow?
With silver bells and cockle shells
And one darned petunia.

Old Mother Hubbard
Went to the cupboard
To get her poor daughter a dress.
When she got there
The cupboard was bare
And so was her daughter, I guess.

Mary had a little lamb;
She also had a bear.
I've often seen her little lamb,
But I've never seen her bear. (bare)

What conclusions can we draw? First of all, the conditions in which these verses are written in autograph albums need to be studied more carefully. Story has emphasized the self-consciousness which attends such writing. Now friendship isextremely important to children, and to be asked to write in an autograph album is a sign of some degree of friendship. The more verses a girl collects, the more friends she seems, to herself and to others, to have. An invitation to write a verse in an autograph album may be one of the first declarations of friendship. Naturally this would lead to self-consciousness on the part of the writer. Story also mentions an awakening consciousness of the opposite sex. These verses usually begin to be written in the later years of elementary school, and often continue through high school. The participants are almost always girls; but these girls are usually interested in certain boys in the group, and the interest is known to their friends.

There is much in these verses of interest to the folklorist. Notice the recurring patterns like "Roses are red, violets are blue" (from a well-known children's verse); the characteristic folksong stanzas; and the analogies with other forms of folklore, such as nursery rhymes and songs. How did these jingles originate? They seem to be fairly modern. Were they modelled on a form such as the nursery rhyme? A more detailed study needs to be undertaken, with the use of more scientific methods. I have merely scratched the surface.

RIDDLES FROM NEW YORK STATE

By Allen M. Garrett

[Dr. Garrett, reared in Chapel Hill, the son of Dr. M. B. Garrett, professor of history, and Dora Mayfred Garrett, a native of New York, is assistant professor of musicology at Catholic University, Washington, D. C.]

Here are two riddles that I learned from my grandmother, who claims that she learned them from her grandmother. They come from the Cranberry Lake region of the Adirondack Mountains in Northern New York State. Grandma refers to them as a "couple of old Indian riddles" that she has always known. There may be some truth in this attribution because, though Grandma vehemently denies it, there is a persistent rumor in that section of the country that one branch of my family tree was here to meet the Mayflower when she tied up alongside Plymouth Rock. I won't confirm or deny this rumor; but I have a batch of relatives up there who make their livings as guides and hunters, and if they are not full-blooded Indians, they are the next thing to it. Anyhow, here are the riddles:

1. As I looked through Hazle Gazle,
   I saw Heldum Beldum
   Tearing down the world of Wigna Wandum.

2. If I had Eenus Geenus,
   I'd kill Heldum Beldum
   For tearing down the world of Wigna Wandum.

Ans. As I looked through the morning mists,
   I saw the cow
   Tearing down the corn field.

3. If I had my dog [sometimes she says gun]
   I'd kill the cow
   For tearing down the corn field.

The second one has a little story connected with it which may point to a ballad origin.

There was once a beautiful Indian pricess who was captured by hostile Indians. The chief of these Indians made a bargain with the princess that if she could ask a riddle that he could not answer, he would allow her to return to her own people. She asked this riddle:

To the dead the living came.
Six there were.
Seven there'll be,
And five shall set the maiden free.

The chief was unable to answer the riddle and returned the girl to her people in accordance with his promise.

Answer: In an old horse skull there is a bird's nest. In the nest are five eggs and the mother bird hatching them. Soon the father bird will return and there will be seven.

GAMES AND RIDDLES FROM WESTERN NORTH CAROLINA

By John Foster West

[A western North Carolinian, Mr. West holds an M. A. degree from the University of North Carolina and is an instructor in English at Elon College.]

My father was fifty-two years old when I was born, and some of the folk rhymes, chants, etc., he taught me were handed down from his own grandfather, who lived to be a hundred and four. Without doubt this great-grandfather, John Baylus West, received them second-hand, because he was a two-fisted old cougar so stubborn he rode a mule across the middle of his farm, after he was so old he could not walk, and blazed trees with an ax, thus dividing his land into equal portions, and giving one half to his only son, my grandfather, and the other to his only daughter. My grandfather had been dead many years before I was born, and this great-grandfather had died long before that.

Games

1. "Hull, gull, hand full" was a game, usually played on the night that corn was "shelled," or removed from the cob to be taken to the mill for grinding next day. One contestant secretly hid a certain number of corn grains in his hand. Then he said, "Hull, gull!"

The guesser answered, "Hand full!"

The other then asked, "How many?"

The "guesser" then had to guess how many grains of corn the other had in his hand. Different penalties were exacted for missing the guess; or if he guessed a certain number of grains too few or too many he received the penalty.

2. Fox and Geese

Fox and geese was a game played by two opponents using a certain number of red and white grains of corn on a board, which had a design mapped out on it. The corn grains were used much as were the "men" on a checkerboard, and were moved in a similar manner. I have forgotten the details of the game; perhaps my mother could tell me, but I recall my father prided himself in being the "best dang fox and geese player hereabouts."

3. At cornshuckings those finding red ears of corn could kiss the girl of their choice.

4. Aintney Over

Aintney over was played with a ball over a house. If a ball was not available, a wad of rags, or something similar was used. As few as two players could compete, or several on each side. One group got on one side of the house and the other on the other side (opposite). Those with the ball shouted, "Aintney!"

Those on the other side shouted in answer, "Over!" which signified their readiness to begin.

Those with the ball would throw it over the house. If those on the other side caught it, they would slip around the house, then dash suddenly at the "aintneys," throwing the ball at one of them. The one hit with the ball was "out." They then exchanged sides of the house and those who had just received the ball were not the "aintneys."

If those shouting "over" did not catch the ball, of course, they then shouted "aintney" and threw it back. The trick was to throw the ball so high, or at such a difficult angle the receivers could not catch it---but it had to go over the "comb" of the house.

Meaningless Chants

1. Nottle, nottle---forty fingers---hoot!---start uh power---kizzlie koot---koot uh kazzie---all uh flaw---Henry's house---Francis Schizzle-dick---mobble-dick, pibble-dick---null.

2. Have ye seen anything of uh high, tall, raw-boned boy 'bout the size of a man? Run away from Busslie Bung's day ater tomorrow; rode a steer heifer, with a straw bridle and hay saddle; had on linen shoes with wooden bottoms, and high-sole heels? Tell me anything of this man I'll give'ye three pints of pigeon milk churned by the scratch of a duck.

The idea was to say these words rapidly. I learned them when I was about eight or so, and I remember I was very proud because my brothers and sisters could not learn them. My father is dead now, and I believe I am the only person living who still remembers them. At least the only other "folks" who knew them, or whom I knew to remember them, are now dead also.

Riddles

1. What's:
   Big at the bottom, little at the top,
   An' a little thing in hit
   Goes flippity-flop?
Answer: An old fashioned churn, which tapered toward the top.

2. As I was goin' to St. Ives I met a man with seven wives;
   And seven wives had seven sacks and seven sacks had seven cats;
   And seven cats had seven kits;
   How many wuz goin' to St. Ives?
Answer: One---He met the others.

Rhymes

1. My nose itches,
   I smell peaches;
   Yander comes a nigger
   With hole in his britches.

2. Teacher, teacher don't whoop me,
   Whoop that Nigger behind that tree.
   He stole money an' I stole honey.
   Teacher, teacher, ain't that funny?

I did know many more of the riddles and rhymes, but they are far back in my memory and are hard to recall. Part of one rhyme was the choosing of the "it" in "hide-an' go seek." All I remember of it is this:

Wire briar, limberlock,
Three geese in a flock,
One flew east, one flew west,

One flew over a cuckoo's nest.
O-U-T,
Out goes he!

At the "he" a man was pointed at as his turn came up and he was "it," or had to find the others when they had hidden.

Another was:

William-a-trimmietoes
Catch three fishes
Put them in dishes***

I perhaps could learn these from my sisters.

Our "Blind-man's Bluff" was called "Blindfold."

Another riddle was to tie a man's shoe in a "hard-knot," (as opposed to bow-knot), then tell him he could go into a dark room nearby, and when he returned the shoe would be "ontied." When he returned the shoe was still tied. But the prankster wins by explaining the shoe is still "on-tied." This could happen nowhere but in the hills where a play on the word "on" for "un" is possible, since many people pronounce them both "on."

When a gullible young swain is taken "snipe hunting," he is led far out in the country, or to some graveyard, and left holding a tow sack in some gully while all his companions go to drive the snipe, a fictitious night bird, toward the sack. Of course he is left there, afraid, in the night until he catches on, if he ever does, or if not, until dawn.

There are hundreds of superstitions; I know many of them, such as: The nose itching means someone is coming; or, The rooster crowing before twelve (midnight) means someone has died, etc.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL CAROLINA FOLK FESTIVAL*
June 10, 11, 12, 1954

By Arthur Palmer Hudson

[Note: The author, Prof. A. P. Hudson of the University English Department, is one of the prime movers in originating and continuing the Carolina Folk Festival, presented here this past weekend. A member of the sponsoring University Folklore Council, he presents here a critical review and self-analysis of the Festival.]

The seventh annual Carolina Folk Festival, which preluded on a damp note and stumbling feet in torrid and rain-pelted Memorial Hall last Thursday night, and crescendoed Friday night under a cloudy but rainless sky with "Vandy, Vandy," achieved a rousing finale Saturday night in moon-drenched Kenan Stadium. The high point was Bascom Lamar Lunsford's singing, at urgent audience request, "Mr. Garfield," song and recitative over 50 years old, giving the mountaineer's version of the assassination, dying moments, last will and testament, and funeral of the twentieth president of the United States, shot down by Charles Guiteau and celebrated in another but inferior ballad.

This special - request number followed close on the heels of Red Parham and George Pegram's harmonica and banjo renditions of "The Fox Chase" and "The Model T and the Cannon Ball" and the third or fourth repeat of "That Good Old Mountain Dew." The first and the last nights' programs, after some dance warmups, had appropriately begun with pure, fine folk interpretations by Bob Keppel, M.I.T. graduate student from Stockton, Cal., of "The Two Sisters," and by Eunice Arnold, Wake County housewife, of "Bonny Barbara Allan."

Ballads To Tear-Jerkers

Sprinkled between were the usual square-dances, clogs and buck-and-wings, stringbands, autoharp, banjo, fiddle, and guitar solos and combinations, and songs ranging from true old ballads and folk lyrics down to moldy and soggy parlor and sheet-music tear-jerkers like "Ashes of Love."

The square-dance teams scrambled from Alleghany and Chowan and points between, and also from Virginia and other neighboring states, but none equaled in finesse the three-score strong team that trekked up from Texas five or six years ago under the leadership of Mrs. Lily Baker. Several, however, were above the average. Among these were Jackie Hale's state champion team from Kinston, two teen-age groups under Mrs. Willis Wynne from Durham County, and Mrs. Laura Bradshaw's Wildcat's Kittens from Orange County. Two cute little boys, Dicky and John David Wright, from Siler City, dressed like ante-bellum East Carolina senators, intrigued the audience with their clogs. They were a pleasing antimasque to the more sophisticated but nonetheless folksy exhibition of a girl from Duke and a boy from State College whose names the p-a system muffed for this reporter (who can't be fired, because he is not a professional).

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*Reprinted from The Chapel Hill News Leader, June 14, 1954, pp. 1 and 2.

Paul Joines of Winston-Salem and Bill Short turned out a spirited handling of "John Henry" and other favorites. Joines, a quieter and less spectacular banjo artist than Pegram, has a fine repertory and a sure, deft touch.

Climax Is "Vandy, Vandy"

The climactic points of the festival came on Friday and Saturday nights, with the lovely old courtship song "Vandy, Vandy," sung in sensitive and authentic style by Manly Wade Wellman, Chapel Hill writer, its discoverer, and Margaret Underwood of Greensboro. Miss Underwood was outstanding among the singers of the festival for her natural, spontaneous, and completely charming giving-out of an old song imaginatively felt and dramatically realized. The only singer repeatedly encored, she rendered "The Good Old Rebel" in such a spirited way that she had the Dixie Crowd screeching the rebel yell between stanzas and sometimes between lines.

Two experiments in audience-participation singing, led by Dan Patterson, graduate English student from Greensboro, and illustrated by screen projections of John Allcott's lively comic-strips with words and music, had the audience roaring "Lazy John" after Dan had sung the first pattern stanza and chorus, and trying manfully to follow him in "The Weary Wayworn Traveler (Palms of Victory)." The audience was somewhat stumped by the greater difficulty of the melody and its own fascinated scrutiny of Allcott's austere and mystical pictures of the Traveler. Dan's singing of the grand old spiritual was in itself a notable performance.

Forrest Covington, whose close rapport with genuine folksong, his natural good taste, and his rich, true voice, have not been spoiled by his considerable radio and television experience, gave fine straightforward interpretations of "The Gypsy Laddie" and "Our Good Man," two of the best of the lighter old ballads. He is also understood to have raided the festival talent for Margaret Underwood's appearance on his Burlington television program, Thursday, June 24, 7:15 p. m.

George Pegram Improves

One of the notable features of the 1954 festival was the improved contribution of George Pegram. This natural banjo artist and mountaineer clown, the prime favorite of the festival and its best drawing card for years, had been both an asset and a liability to the festival. A genius in his line, George had previously discounted his stage performances with unsolicited and irrelevant clowning and limelight-stealing. In his frenzied rendering of "That Good Old Mountain Dew," he had so gargled and swallowed and grunted and spit out the words, and gyrated and postured, that none but initiates knew what he was singing. Furthermore, his claques of aficionados (chiefely ribald Carolina students), with their loud and persistent cries of "George! George! We Want George!" and George's antics thus provoked and frequently spoiled a really good performance by others. An example was that of an English folk singer of extraordinary chairm and distinction, Miss Kingsley, a few years ago. This summer, however, without his having been cowed, George's conduct was unexceptionable, and his diction was greatly improved, with no loss of his really special quality. He was even seen lecturing a pretty little gum-chewing, wriggling musician in one of the string bands--in vain, he said-- "You can't tell a woman nothin'."

Bascom Lamar Lunsford, director of the festival, and specialist in sudden spontaneous combustion and chain reaction, did not show so much fire as of old. He is now 72. But he did exercise better control of his sometimes - unruly performers. He brought to the festival several figures, such as Red Parham and

George Pegram and Forrest Covington, who began as real amateur folk entertainers, graduated into the ranks of the professionals (as did Red Parham, who appeared on Major Bowes' programs and in New York night spots), and have yet retained their amateur spirit, along with all of their folkiness. And Mr. Lunsford deserves great credit for his leadership of and cooperation with the University Folklore Council, which officially sponsors the festival.

Effort To Raise Tone

The 1954 program represented a conscious and deliberate effort of Mr. Lunsford and the Council to raise the tone and enrich the variety and quality of the offerings. Perhaps for the first time in the history of the festival he had the active and contributory inner participation of members of the Council in developing a program that would truly, in his own words, "recapture the cultural values in our traditional American music, dancing, and balladry, and present them at their unspoiled best," and thus accord with the dignity of the University fostering it. Among these contributors to the program were John Allcott (of the Extension Division), I. G. Greer (of the Business Foundation), and A. Palmer Hudson(of the English Department). Besides this cooperation, he enjoyed the usual suave and efficient administrative aid of Russell Grumman and E. Ralph Rankin (Extension Division), and technical assistance from Kenneth McIntyre and Norman Cordon (Extension).

From the point of view of popular reception and financial return, the 1954 fesival, while not comparing favorably with some previous ones, does show encouraging signs. Paid-up attendance (there were many complimentary tickets, including 40-odd inmates of Butner Hospital and scores of friends of the performers and officials), according to E. Ralph Rankin, who was in charge of tickets and admissions, ran: Thursday, 250; Friday, 820; Saturday, 1000. The meagerness of the Thursday - night audience is attributable to the sudden and violent rainstorm that burst shortly after 7 p. m. Most of it was made up of people who had driven in to see the show and had nowhere else to go or stay. Chapel Hillians did. The sudden rise from Thursday to Friday, and the satisfactory jump from Friday to Saturday, Mr. Rankin attributes in part to better weather, but also to innovations in the program. "The word began to go out," he says, "that the show was good." It was, in spots.

THE TWENTY-FIFTH ANNUAL RAMP CONVENTION

By Arthur Palmer Hudson

Though I had lived in North Carolina for twenty-five years, studying its folklore, I believe that my first knowledge of the ramp and the Ramp Convention came to me in the Spring of 1954. Much of it was furnished by the following dispatch in the Raleigh News and Observer for May 2, 1954 (p. 2), clipped and given me by one of my English 167 (Ballad and Folksong) students, Mrs. Elizabeth Shope, of Chapel Hill:

Ramp Convention Scheduled

Canton, May1-An innocent-looking little wild vegetable continues to defy description and inspire a unique annual celebration in the mountains of North Carolina.

The vegetable is known as ramp, and it grows wild in the Great Smokies. The celebration, known as the Haywood County Ramp Convention, will mark its Silver Anniversary on May 16 with the gathering of North Carolinians and vistors from many states at Camp Hope, near Canton, for a sociable day of feasting on ramps and other picnic fare.

People who eat ramps say there is nothing like a ramp. People who don't eat ramps say the same thing, adding the word "fortunately." Ramps have been compared with garlic and onions, but most people agree that description is too mild.

There will be ramps for all who want to sample them at the Silver Anniversary Convention. Convention-goers who prefer not to eat ramps may bring their own picnic lunches or purchase plates of ramp-free country ham, scrambled eggs, fried chicken and cornbread from the Ramp Convention picnic committee.

Principal speaker will be Thad Eure, North Carolina's secretary of state, who some years ago was named "speaker for life of the Ramp Convention." Pretty Joyce Ann Morgan of Bethel will be crowned Queen of Ramps.

The Ramp Convention got its start in 1930 when a handful of ramp-fanciers gathered at Black Camp Gap in the Great Smokies, one of the few regions in America where ramps are found. By 1952, the convention had outgrown its original site and was moved to Camp Hope, where picnic facilities are ample for crowds of up to 10,000. At the 1953 convention, Secretary of State Eure presented the sponsors with an official charter for the "Friends of Ramp, Inc.," a non-stock, non-profit organization dedicated to promoting the ramp "notwithstanding the claims of any other area of the entire world."

A.W. Parker of Canton, president of the ramp organization, says that some 50 bushels of ramps will be harvested for this year's convention.

Twenty-Fifth Annual Ramp Convention

On May 16 I was at Cullowhee, where, with one of my graduate students, Mr. Raymond McLain, I was the guest of a senior member of my English 167, Miss Claire Reed, and her mother. We had gone to the mountains to record folklore, chiefly folksongs. Reminded that the Ramp Convention had been going on at Camp Hope, near Waynesville, for two days and that this was the last day, I was offered the use of one of the Reed automobiles, and Mr. McLain drove me over.

Camp Hope is in a beautiful cove, surrounded by high, steep mountains, with a brawling little mountain stream (Pigeon River) flowing through and watering a green meadow several acres in extent. A large pavilion, with kitchen, dining-rooms, and offices, was too small for the crowd (William Langland's "field full of folk"), and a temporary stage or podium had been set up to one side, facing the meadow, where the people sat on benches and the grass (which looked very soft and, [1] was told, was free of chiggers). I was informed that there had been "preaching, singing, and dinner on the ground" that morning. But nothing like that was going on at the moment of our arrival. We heard a stentorian voice announce "The Pigeon River Ramblers," and a sharp mountain stringband began playing "Cumberland Gap." As the m. c. stepped back from the podium, I approached him, told him who I was, and explained my desire to get a tape-recording of the program. "I am C. C. Poindexter," he said. "Welcome to all we've got. Set up your machine and go ahead." Then, to the audience: "Ladies and gentlemen, we have with us Professor A. P. Hudson, of the University of North Carolina, who is recording our program. He'll be glad to get individual or group special recordings in the pavilion after the show is over."

A bystander, an alumna of Carolina, explained that C. C. Poindexter was a great guard on Carolina teams, playing on the other side of center from Grady Pritchard, of Chapel Hill, and that he is now a high school principal in that region and the m. c. of the Ramp Convention Folk Festival and Annual Canton V. F. W. Folk Festival (July 15, 16, 17, 1954). He certainly remembered how to treat a professor!

Meanwhile, Mr. McLain had found an electric outlet and had set up the tape recorder, in spite of the eager but somewhat harassing assistance of small boys who clustered around. Following the Pigeon River Ramblers were two other stringbands, all from the neighborhood, and all good, with old favorites such as "Sourwood Mountain," "Guinea in the Pea Patch," "The Flop-Eared Mule," and "Old Joe Clark." Band leader Nanny of the Pigeon River Ramblers was an acrobatic fiddler. He could play the instrument in all imaginable (and a few unimaginable) postures or positions: back of his neck; on all fours; with one hand holding the fiddle behind him and the bow-arm between his legs; standing on his head, etc. -- and never missing a beat. Individual performers on the banjo, the fiddle, the harmonica, the dulcimer, and the guitar gave good renditions of some of the traditional mountain favorites -- "On Top of Old Smoky," "John Henry," "The Pretty Mohea," "The Ground Hog," "Barbara Allen," "The Wreck of the Old '97," "Lost John," "Tom Dooley," and the like. There was some good clog and buck-and-wing dancing.

After the main show had finished, a number of individuals and the Pigeon River Ramblers went with me and Mr. McLain into a small private dining-room for a few recordings by special request. One of the number who followed us in, a middle-aged mountain matron, said, "I used to sing 'Cumberland Gap.'" (Unknown to her, the tape recorder was still recording.) "But," she declared, "I don't have no truck with no such foolishment no more." "How did it go?" I asked. She sang:

Lay down, boys, and take a little nap;
Forty-four miles to the Cumberland Gap --

then some stanzas about the girls, harpies of the region (in Browining's phrase, "sportive ladies [who] leave their doors ajar"), lying in wait for the boys on payday, and said, "I ain't a-goin' to sing the rest in no mixed company. But I shore wisht my sister was here to sing hit for you." When I told her I already had on tape what she had sung, and asked her for her name, she roundly refused to give it. Later she did, privately. The secret is mine and hers. A pretty mountain girl, about eighteen years old, with cook's apparel and cap on her head, sat near the door to the kitchen, where the ramps were still being friend with eggs and ham, vigorously fanning herself (it was a hot day, even in Pigeon River Valley). "Lettie knows a lot of old songs," said one of the spectators, pointing to her. "Won't you sing for the recorder?" I wheedled. "Naw," she replied. "Do you know 'Little Matty Groves' (sometimes called 'Little Musgrave and Lady Barnard'?" I asked. "Sure do." "Do you know 'Lord Lovel'?" "You bet." "Won't you please sing them for me?" "Shore won't." One of the boys suggested that the Ramblers play "The Bald Eagle" specially for her. They did. "Now, since the boys have favored you, won't you loosen up and sing." "Naw!" "Why won't you sing?" I pleaded. "Well, sir, I've been a-cookin' and a-smellin' them ramps all day, and I'm plumb tord out."

This declaration finished me, and also reminded me that I had not eaten any ramps. (I had ordered some, with ham and eggs, but as the dish was being handed me someone caught me by the coat-tail and dragged me off for "something special" in the recording line.) It was then too late to get an order cooked for me. So I got Lettie to give me two of the plants, raw, untrimmed (they looked like lilies of the valley with a bulb like that of an onion; but they didn't smell like lilies of the valley). I put them in my brief case and was assured that "hit was ruint forever." But it wasn't. Unprovoked, the ramp is a rather innocent and unoffensive vegetable, but like its biological relative the skunk it is capable of great things when stepped on or otherwise stirred up.

Except for the folk festival and the general idea, the Ramp Convention struck me as synthetic, "revival" folklore. The Indians and the pioneers of old, and a few die-hards today, have eaten it. There are stories about its shyness, its love for soil where beech and buckeye grow, in deep mountain coves, where it is sometimes necessary to go in with a bulldozer to reach it. And there are a few sayings about it, of somewhat proverbial character -- "A ramp? A ramp is a ramp and nothin' but a ramp. Why, hit's just a ramp, and there ain't no other way to name hit or describe hit." But there does not seem to be any considerable body of ramp folklore. The festival, I judge, is largely the work of Mr. Eure and a few others canny enough to publicize and capitalize something unique. All power to them and to the stentorian, hearty, hospitable C. C. Poindexter!

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